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Ibogaine Outcome Study: A Progress Report on the Iboga Therapy House

Sandra Karpetas

Project Director

Iboga Therapy House



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I am pleased to announce that through the generous funding, assistance and mentorship of MAPS and after many long months of setbacks and challenges, the Iboga Therapy House is now a non-profit entity ready to open the doors of our ibogaine clinic in Canada.

Our program is based on a holistic harm reduction and health promotion-based approach to recovery and personal exploration. It is our goal to facilitate an improvement in the quality of life of those seeking recovery from chemical dependence to substances such as heroin, methadone and other opiates, crack, cocaine, methamphetamine and alcohol in a safe and supportive environment to support the psychospiritual and therapeutic exploration of deeper issues through processes facilitated by the powerful experience that ibogaine may catalyze.

This project aims to complement the range of existing drug treatment options with an Ibogaine therapy service that recognizes that reductions in problematic use, changes in patterns of use toward forms of use that are less problematic, and sustained periods of prolonged abstinence all contribute to healthier lifestyles, increase resiliency and in turn contribute to improvements in quality of life for the drug addicted population.

Our staff consists of two Emergency Medical Technicians (1st Aid Level 3) to be present in case of an emergency, nine facilitators with a wide range of skills to monitor and support the participants in their treatment, two of which are professional substance abuse counselors, plus a host of community volunteers offering aftercare services such as bodywork/massage therapy, ecstatic dance, guided breathwork, reiki, light exercise such as yoga and nutritional planning. Several doctors have also requested to observe the treatments.

As ibogaine is not regulated in Canada as it is in the US, this affords us a unique opportunity to conduct much needed research on ibogaine-assisted therapy.

MAPS will provide the evaluation and research component by conducting a one-year follow-up study using information collected from 20 people treated at the Iboga Therapy House. Valerie Mojeiko of MAPS and Leah Martin of the Iboga Therapy House will coordinate the study.

The evaluation tools have been chosen to be reliable, well validated, and repeatable. Special consideration is given to measures that assess several indicators of success in addition to abstinence. The primary measure is the Addiction Severity Index, a widely used index that measures seven problem areas to obtain a comprehensive picture of a person's life and lifestyle. Secondary measures include the Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventories, Subjective and Objective Opiate Withdrawal Scales, Peak Experience Profile (for measuring content of Ibogaine experience and how it relates to recovery), and pain and craving scales. We hope to show that ibogaine-assisted therapy is associated with extended periods of abstinence, and that intensity of the ibogaine experience will be associated with longer periods of abstinence.

A copy of the protocol design can be found on the MAPS website on the Ibogaine research page at www.maps.org/ibogaine

Over the last few months we have developed a program manual that is intended to serve as a protocol

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for our own upcoming program and as a potential model for ibogaine treatment and research in Canada.

It is of great interest to develop strategies for communicating with people in other fields of interest or study, to open dialogue about other psychedelics and entheogenic substances that have value as therapeutic agents of self-discovery. Increased interest and understanding of these potentials could lead to changes in the societal perception of psychedelics and lead to educated changes in drug policy, opening the door towards further research into a range of potential beneficial uses in legal contexts.

We are now accepting applications for Ibogaine-assisted therapy from chemically dependant applicants wishing to participate in our study. We plan to conduct our first treatments in November 2005 and to complete the treatment phase of this study in the spring of 2006. For more information about our program, how to apply and the costs of treatment please see our website at: www.ibogatherapyhouse.net

Many thanks to all the supporters of MAPS for your assistance in making this project a reality!

If you would like to make a donation to this project go to: www.maps.org/donate and specify "Iboga Therapy House"

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